



Discussing Hard Topics Without Hard Feelings

with Jay Brown

FOCUS VERSE

The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Job 33:4

DISCUSSION

1. How easy is it for you to make new friends? If it's relatively easy, what are some of the traits or experiences that have helped you make meaningful connections with people? If you find making friends difficult, what are some traits or talents you wish you had, or things you wish you knew how to do better? *Proverbs 27:9*

2. How big would you say your circle of friends is—not casual acquaintances or co-workers you don't see outside the office, but close friends you make a point of spending time with? What are the qualities that make those people particularly meaningful to you? How many of them are the kind of people who "know everything" about you? *1 Thessalonians 5:11*

3. In your relationships with friends or mentors, is there an equal exchange of energy—do you feel like they're "pouring into" you as much as you're pouring into them? Do you have any relationships where the exchange of energy is rather one-sided—toward the other person or toward you? Do you find those relationships as satisfying or meaningful as the others? What do you feel like you might be able to do to make the exchange of energy more equal?

4. When you get into a discussion or debate about potentially divisive topics, how curious are you about the other person's opinion or their reasons for having it? Do you go into these discussions genuinely hoping to learn something, or are you more concerned with convincing them you're right? Are you the type of person who can "agree to disagree," or are you more likely to resent or condemn somebody who holds an opinion different from yours? *Proverbs 18:2*

5. Talk about the verse Jay cites from the book of Job—"The spirit of God has awakened me and the breath of God gives me life." Do you feel that this describes your relationship with God? If so, what is the breath of God moving you to do right now? If not, do you have any friends who could help you figure out how to draw more inspiration from God? *Job 33:4*